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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU  
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 7378  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 1137  
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 1031  
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 5402  
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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 5109  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1748  
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU  
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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2006

#### In Today's Papers

Turkey's Final Decision to Come After Gul's Visit to Syria  
All papers report that Turkish military and government leaders discussed Turkey's possible contribution to the peacekeeping force in Lebanon in detail at yesterday's National Security Council (NSC) meeting. In its brief written statement following the meeting, the NSC did not announce a decision on Turkey's contribution but praised and expressed support for UNSC Resolution 1701. Milliyet and Hurriyet report that during his one day visit to Syria today, FM Gul will urge Syria to stop its support for Hezbollah. Gul will also pass on the conditions under which Turkey will send troops to Lebanon. Milliyet and Cumhuriyet report that Gul may visit Tehran in the coming days to deliver messages similar to those he is expected to deliver in Syria.

Columnist Okay Gonensin, writing in the mass appeal Vatan, believes that the US is using Turkey's participation in the peacekeeping forces as a bargaining chip for action against the PKK: "Expressed through diplomacy, Turkey is receiving a message from the US administration which can be translated as 'Turkey should make a stronger commitment in the Middle East so that it can enjoy a better result in the fight against PKK.' The truth is that Turkey will find itself in a very difficult situation if and when it becomes one of the sides in the Middle East dispute. And this could happen in an instant if a Turkish soldier is killed during the southern Lebanon peacekeeping force operations. At this point we don't know exactly what the US has been asking from Turkey in exchange for the PKK card. It won't be surprising though if every demand contains potential risks for Turkey's future."

Fehmi Kuru commenting in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak argues for a broader regional role for Turkey: "The Turkish government is still wavering on the issue of sending troops to Lebanon. The hesitation stems from very understandable reasons -- Lebanon is not like

Bosnia, Kosovo or Afghanistan. Assuming duties in Lebanon puts Turkey directly into the Middle East balance, which also means Turkey will come face-to-face with every problem there. Turkey's role should be in the bigger picture not in a particular one. It would be better for us to show interest in the entire set of issues on a regional scale rather than being enthusiastic about fixing imbalances created by others."

Commenting in mainstream Milliyet, Fikret Bila warns that "a lasting peace in Lebanon directly depends on a lasting peace in Palestine": "Developments regarding the Palestine issue will have a direct impact on the success of the ceasefire and peacekeeping efforts in southern Lebanon. Any operation by Israel in Gaza and the West Bank areas or any acts by Hezbollah will put the peacekeepers in a very difficult situation. A lasting peace in Lebanon directly depends on a lasting peace in Palestine. Ankara is very much aware of this fact and expects to see a similar interpretation of this situation by neighboring countries. Otherwise, peacekeepers, including Turkish soldiers, will be taking a big risk and there will be no peace in Lebanon."

President Bush Comments on Additional UN Resolution  
Sabah, Radikal and Vatan: At a press conference in Washington yesterday President Bush said that "the need for an international force in Lebanon is urgent" and urged the international community to respond to calls for deployment as soon as possible. Vatan reports that the US has decided to send \$230 Million to Lebanon. President Bush added that "the US is considering an additional UN resolution to clarify the mandate of the UN peacekeepers in Lebanon."

#### Forest Fires

All papers: As firefighters and forest fire teams worked hard to extinguish fires in 20 different places in the Aegean and

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Mediterranean yesterday, new fires broke out yesterday in Bodrum, Antalya and Adana. Three hundred hectares of forestry have been destroyed by fire in three different locations of Antalya, and the Mugla provincial forestry directorate claimed that 500 hectares of forestry were destroyed in the region. According to the Forestry Ministry statistics, nearly 2500 hectares of forestry was destroyed by fire in 447 incidents in the first eight months of this year.

#### TV Highlights

NTV (6 A.M.)

#### Domestic News

- The hard disks of Turkish Hezbollah militants' computers seized by Turkish Intelligence officers in operations six years ago have been analyzed. The disks contain detailed information about murders committed by Hezbollah.

- Turkish-Iranian natural gas pipeline damaged by PKK attacks has been repaired and gas flow has been resumed.

#### International News

- Iranian leader Khamenei says Tehran will continue to pursue nuclear technology despite a UNSC resolution.

- US President George Bush says the need for an international force in Lebanon is urgent

- Two passenger trains collide in Egypt killing 80 people and injuring 163

- A train traveling between Spain and France with 426 passengers derails in Spain, killing six people

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